



The First Store by ALEXA retail competition enters its third round, this time with an entirely new concept

Deutsche POP will be the exclusive cooperation partner

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The First Store by ALEXA retail competition, initiated by the popular ALEXA shopping centre on Berlin's Alexanderplatz, is being launched for the third time – and with an entirely new concept. After two editions as an open competition, it will be now run in cooperation with Deutsche POP. *First Store by ALEXA as Academy Edition* will be open exclusively to students of this creative academy and it will take place at 12 locations in Germany, as well as in Vienna and Amsterdam. The competition will allow entrants to completely rethink the topic of retail, with the aim to promote innovative ideas and concepts in shopping centres. Everything and anything is on the cards; from the store to catering, service to event location. The competition will be hosted by the owner of the ALEXA, Union Investment, the centre's operator, Sonae Sierra, and the marketing agency, Twenty One Media.

Oliver Hanna, Centre Manager and member of the *First Store* jury, explains, “in the retail sector we need to go new paths, identify our strengths and provide customers with what they are looking for. The ALEXA centre has always been innovative; and the creative, popular courses offered by the Deutsche POP academy have the finger on the pulse too. That's why I'm so pleased to have our new cooperation partner on board and am so very excited to see what ideas the students come up with.”

Two strong brands – two perfect partners

The collaboration between ALEXA and Deutsche POP sees two strong brands coming together to inspire one another – not least because the Deutsche POP students and the ALEXA's target group are a perfect match.

“As an academy, we have always taught from practice for practice and place great importance on collaborating with the industry and the *First Store* cooperation with the ALEXA reflects the Deutsche POP mindset. Our students will have an opportunity to gain real insights and practical experience, to realise their creative potential and to gain a foothold in the industry,” explains Rüdiger J. Veith, Managing Director of Deutsche POP.

And not only that. “Students will have an opportunity to help shape the future of retail for their generation,” adds Ralf Schaffus, Head of Retail Asset Management in Germany at Union Investment and jury member. “Maintaining a top position in the retail industry means constantly seeking out new paths. And if we want to create something new, we should never forget to include the target group that makes up a large proportion of our visitors.”

The questions that the competition's participants should ask themselves and openly address without any preconceptions are as follows.

How would they like to create shopping experiences, use retail space and communicate offers?

The combined creative potential of the Deutsche POP courses, from fashion and photography to design, marketing, fitness and music, is expected to produce exciting results.

The Deutsche POP students will take part at various places in Germany, while the Vienna and Amsterdam locations will enrich the ideas pool internationally. This is an important component, because it also takes into account the internationality of the ALEXA centre: in 2019, around 30 percent of visitors to the centre were tourists.

The conduct of the competition

First Store by ALEXA is open to both solo and team entrants, and teams can transcend both courses and physical locations – in fact, to match the start-up mentality of the young generation,

the idea is for everything to be as open, creative and innovative as possible. Throughout the creative process, the teams will be accompanied and supported by the initiators in regular online meetings.

Concepts will have to be submitted by the end of the winter semester in March 2021, after which a five-member jury will select the winners. The winning team will receive a budget totalling 40,000 Euro to implement its concept and present it for six weeks from June 2021 in the *First Store Cube* at the ALEXA centre.

Further information: alexab2b.com; www.firststorealexa.com ; www.deutsche-pop.com

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About First Store by Alexa

First Store by Alexa is a retail casting competition for innovative business ideas, organised by the Alexa shopping and leisure centre on Berlin's Alexanderplatz. Following competitions in 2017 and 2018, *First Store* is now entering its third round.

With 16 million visitors per year (as of 2019), **the Alexa** on Berlin's Alexanderplatz is one of the most successful shopping centres in Germany.

Deutsche POP is an academy for the creative professions in music and media, and offers more than 30 Bachelor's and Diploma courses. At more than 20 locations in Germany, Austria, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia, China, Indonesia & Australia, the Deutsche POP academy offers a flexible form of modern practical training.

Union Investment (www.union-investment.com/realestate) is one of Europe's leading property investment managers. Its property portfolio, which is diversified over 23 country markets and five continents, comprises more than 400 properties in the office, hotel, retail, residential and logistics segments. With a volume of around 10 billion Euro, the worldwide retail portfolio currently comprises 86 existing properties, including the FÜNF HÖFE CityQuartier in Munich, the ALEXA centre in Berlin and the Palladium in Prague.

Sonae Sierra (www.sonae.sierra.com) is an international company specialising in the development of exciting retail properties and services. Sonae Sierra has offices in 12 countries and provides services to customers in countries as diverse as Portugal, Algeria, Brazil, Colombia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey. The company owns 46 shopping centres with a market value of approximately 7 billion Euro and manages and/or rents out 81 shopping centres with a total rental area of 2.6 million m² and more than 9300 tenants. Sonae Sierra is currently developing 16 projects, including ten for third-party proprietors. Sonae Sierra currently works with over 20 co-investors at asset level and manages four property funds for a large number of investors from around the world.

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